

enormous energy into the task of developing audiences from preschoolers to senior citizens, and all ages in between.

Maestro Pearce is a gifted conductor of international renown with a brilliant knowledge of musical styles and repertoire. He is an equally gifted pianist and composer. His keen Irish wit, personal charm, enthusiasm, and intellect, combined with a willingness to spread the joy of music whenever and wherever, and special gifts.

When Colman came to Mississippi in 1987, he found a group of superb players, an enthusiastic Board of Governors, and a loyal army of volunteers known as the Symphony League. He was aware of a financial deficit, of unrest among the musicians, and of declining audience support. Quickly garnering the support of the board, league and the musicians, Maestro Pearce forged ahead. After a few successful seasons, he led the orchestra into statewide status and it became the Mississippi Symphony.

Colman's musicianship, intellect, vision, and savoir faire have made him an appealing stage presence in venues beyond the formal concert halls. He has taken the MSO everywhere audiences can be found—ball parks, schools, city streets, shopping malls, theaters, lakesides, and beaches. Thousands of Mississippians have come to recognize Colman and the musicians by name and by instrument. They have identified with the Symphony as a Mississippi "product" of which they are proud. The Symphony has become an accessible commodity across the State.

Upgrading the quality of musical offerings, especially in formal concert halls, has been his major focus. However, he has expanded the goals and outreach to include programs at all levels:

**Chamber Orchestra.**—Twenty-eight core musicians present concerts within the regular season at Millsaps College Recital Hall and the Briarwood Presbyterian Church sanctuary. These concerts are viewed as "learning experiences" since the programs are always sprinkled with biographical data and interesting anecdotes about the composers whose works are being performed. Programming is innovative, often including contemporary music. Colman plays twentieth century music with flair, challenging the understanding and enjoyment of both the musicians and their audiences.

**Children's Concerts.**—More than 4,000 children in grades three, four, and five literally pack Jackson's city auditorium annually when Colman directs the special concerts. He assists teachers in area schools in the preparation of study materials to acquaint students with the program they will hear.

**Kinderconcerts.**—Programs are planned according to the attention span of pre-school children with emphasis on short classical and new music. Colman has featured the work of Mississippi composer Luigi

Zananelli ("The Steadfast Tin Soldier"), and an adaptation of the Dr. Seuss classic, "Green Eggs and Ham", to the delight of the young audiences.

**Academic and Performing Arts Complex.**—This branch of the Jackson Public School system has been supported by Colman through lectures, by allowing students to attend orchestra rehearsals, and through invitations to music and dance students to actually perform with the Symphony.

**Young Artist Competition.**—In addition to showcasing young talent whenever possible, Colman has judged competitions, offering insightful feedback to contestants. Winners have often been invited to perform with the Chamber Orchestra.

**Family Fun Concerts.**—In addition to enjoyable and easy listening music performed by the Symphony, the concerts have featured other attractions, such as mimes, dancers, and storytellers, in a casual setting. Colman's final Family Fun Concert featured a performance of Walter Anderson's "Robinson the Cat," a work composed by Maestro Pearce in collaboration with mezzo-soprano Lester Senter Wilson.

**Pops Concerts.**—Old Trace Park at the Reservoir has been the scene of the Symphony Pops for many years, with residents of a five county area gathering on the shore (and in the water) for an early summer evening concert of semi-classical and popular music.

**The Messiah.**—Under the direction of Maestro Pearce, the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra has presented the "definitive" performance of Handel's Christmas classic in Thalia Mara Hall each December. Soloists are chosen from throughout the state, and choirs from the state's colleges and universities have been showcased. In recent years, the famed Mississippi Chorus has been featured.

A native of Ireland with an honors degree from the National University of Ireland, Dublin, Colman Pearce studied conducting with Franco Ferrara in Hilversum and Hans Swarowsky in Vienna. In 1965, he began a long association with the Irish National Broadcasting Organization, serving as Co-principal, Principal, and now Conductor Laureate of the Irish Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra (now called the National Symphony Orchestra.) In the years prior to accepting his position with the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra and since, he has maintained a busy schedule as a guest conductor in other parts of the United States, and in Brazil, Canada, Argentina, Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, Iceland, Israel, Hungary, and in the United Kingdom.

Maestro Pearce will now concentrate upon his activities as a pianist, arranger and composer, his recordings of contemporary works, and upon guest conducting from his home in Dublin.

Colman leaves the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra financially sound, having established record setting season ticket sales and significantly

broadened the orchestra's constituency.

When Colman came to Mississippi twelve years ago, he immediately accepted and embraced the best in Mississippians and set about adding value to the state through his development of the orchestra. With his Irish charm, good humor, talent, artistic commitment, and resourceful programming, he has also won the hearts of many Mississippians who now bid him "Goodbye, and Godspeed."●

#### TRIBUTE TO MR. GEORGE RING

● Mr. TORRICELLI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize George Ring who is being honored by Catholic Community Services, the largest non-profit social service agency in the state of New Jersey. Headquartered in Newark, CCS serves more than 200,000 poor and disadvantaged citizens throughout northern New Jersey. George has been an ardent supporter of this organization and is most deserving of this honor.

George has served New Jersey and the nation in many capacities. After graduating from Seton Hall University, George joined the United States Army and served from 1966-1969 as a Platoon Leader, Company Commander, and General's Aide. He received multiple awards and citations for his service, including the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, Oak Leaf Cluster, and a Presidential Unit Citation.

After working several years in the banking industry, George co-founded Cross Country Cable, Ltd. This firm was involved in the ownership, construction and operation of cable television and microwave systems inside the United States and around the world. In 1995, he sold this company and formed a new company, Wireless Cable International Inc. George is the president and CEO of this new company.

George has been active at his alma mater and in his community. At Seton Hall University, he is a member of the Executive and Finance Committees of the Board of Regents and is a member of the Board of Trustees. He is also a recipient of the "Distinguished Alumnus Award" from Seton Hall University and Union High School.

In addition, George has served on the boards of several visual arts programs and symphony orchestras as well as New Jersey Public Broadcasting. He is a past President of the Watchung-Warren Rotary Club and has been active with local youth sports leagues. He has given his financial support to numerous schools and charities. Catholic Community Services has been one of the grateful recipients of George's generosity. He has spent countless hours fundraising on behalf of CCS. For his acts of philanthropy and his visible role in the community, I am proud to recognize George Ring as he is honored by CCS.●